

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 3795

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, GT
SUBJ: PANZOS

1. DURING A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT LAUGERUD JUNE 27 I ASKED HIM IF HIS GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO RELEASE PUBLICLY A REPORT ON ITS INVESTIGATION OF THE EVENTS IN PANZOS. HE SAID THAT THEY DID BUT THE REPORT WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE ISSUED FOR ANOTHER MONTH YET. HE REFERRED TO PANZOS AS A TERRIBLE DEVELOPMENT BUT DEFENDED THE ROLE OF THE ARMY PERSONNEL INVOLVED. HE SAID IT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT THREE OF THE SOLDIERS HAD BEEN UNDER ATTACK AND THEIR LIVES ENDANGERED BEFORE THEIR FELLOW SOLDIERS OPENED FIRE.

2. WHEN I SAID IT WAS REGRETTABLE THAT THIS INCIDENT SHOULD HAVE OCCURRED AT THE END OF HIS REGIME WHICH HAD BEEN MARKED BY ADVANCES IN THIS AREA, THE PRESIDENT AGREED AND SAID HE FELT THAT THE AGITATION LEADING TO THE INCIDENT HAD BEEN PLANNED DELIBERATELY BY LEFTISTS TO HURT HIM. HE SAID THEY KNEW HE PRIZED PERHAPS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INDIANS AND THEY HAD TRIED TO BLACKEN HIS REPUTATION WITH THEM.

3. HE REFERRED TO THE REPORT WHICH COL. HOOK HAD BEEN GIVEN
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ABOUT PANZOS AND SAID HE HAD ABSOLUTE TRUST IN THE THREE MILITARY OFFICERS WHO WERE CHIEFLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REPORT. MOREOVER, HE SAID, HE HAD SENT A TRUSTED NEWSMAN, JOSE PALMIERI, TO PANZOS TO TALK AT LENGTH WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE AREA AND PROVIDE AN INDEPENDENT REPORT. PALMIERI'S REPORT, HE SAID, HAD COINCIDED 99 PERCENT WITH THE ARMY FINDINGS.
BOSTER

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NNN

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